



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 106 – May 1, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

I am excited to announce the inception of our new FY 07 \$1 million regional and in-state marketing program. Built on the new brand architecture for Arizona, this program was redesigned to be more inclusive of Arizona's four distinctive regions and will complement our efforts to market Phoenix and Central Arizona. The success of each region is important to the overall success of Arizona as a destination, and we hope to see more participation in this yearlong campaign. As we move forward into fiscal year 2007, this program is a valuable stepping stone on our path to success. Please take the time to read more about it below.

I also want to urge all of you to check your mailboxes this week for the very first issue of Crossroads, AOT's new quarterly industry newsletter. This exciting addition to our communications collection includes information about programs and initiatives at AOT and throughout our industry. It will also house quarterly research statistics and give you a chance to get to know an industry professional and an AOT staff member. I hope you all enjoy this inaugural issue!

Have a good week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Make the Visitors' First Impression a Grand One!

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Grand Impressions workshops series is in full swing and now is the time to register for a workshop near you. Those that attended the first workshop in Bullhead City were impressed by the program, with participants saying "This is the most enjoyable workshop I've ever been to," and "Every year these workshops are a great source of information." Grand Impressions workshops are a full day of education and training designed to empower tourism professionals by offering a Customer Service Training Program featuring: "How to Host International Visitors," a presentation on Arizona tourism attractions, and a mini-familiarization tour of an attraction in the workshop host's area, designed to provide first-hand knowledge of exciting Arizona destinations. The workshops are offered free of charge to travel counselors and hospitality professionals across the state. All workshops will be held from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Below is a list of the remaining Grand Impressions workshops for this year:

Mesa	May 5, 2006 (Full! Closed workshop!)
Sierra Vista	May 12, 2006

Space is limited! To register, please contact Sarah Martins, Travel Counselor at the Arizona Office of Tourism, at (602) 364-3687 or smartins@azot.gov.

2007 Professional Travel Planner's Guide Publication

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Travel Industry Marketing Division is now publishing the 2007 Professional Travel Planner's Guide (PTPG). With a circulation of 20,000, it will be distributed by AOT's international offices (Japan, Mexico, Canada, Great Britain and Germany) and at domestic and international trade shows and national promotional events. It will also be direct mailed to tour operators and travel agents, as well as in response to client inquiries. This annual comprehensive statewide guide includes detailed information on Arizona including: extensive itineraries, maps, motorcoach and tour information, special events, top attractions, shopping, activities, accommodations, restaurants and receptive and transportation listings. Display Advertising and Directory Listings are available for purchase by Arizona companies - advertising space closes June 7, 2006. Directory Listing Categories include:

- Accommodations
- Activities & Recreation
- Attractions & Shopping
- Receptive Services & DMCs
- Restaurants
- Transportation

Please call Hennen Publishing at 602-906-3085 for more information or to sign up.

Summer Specials on ArizonaVacationValues.com

Summer is just around the corner, and now is the time when vacationers begin to plan ahead for those hot summer months. The Arizona Office of Tourism would like to remind visitors of all that Arizona has to offer. From early morning tee times to cool mountain adventures and stunning Sonoran desert sunsets, Arizona is a terrific destination for summer vacation. ArizonaVacationValues.com is a great place to post tourism-related summer specials, discounts, and packages that are valid from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Offers may include accommodations packages, tours, special rates, etc. To participate, go to www.ArizonaVacationValues.com and select special promotion "Summer Specials" when you submit your offer. If you need additional assistance, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at (602) 364-3695 or mmagnusson@azot.gov.

Promoting - AZ - Advertising

New In-state/Regional Marketing Program

For FY 07, AOT is redesigning its Regional Tourism Advertising and Fulfillment Program. In the past, the four designated marketing regions outside of Phoenix and Central Arizona were encouraged to participate, but due to requirements of the program, only Northern Arizona and Southern Arizona have successfully been involved. Starting in FY 07, AOT will increase the marketing budget to \$1 million for a yearlong marketing campaign and media schedule, allowing the program to be inclusive of all four marketing regions outside of Phoenix and Central Arizona*. The new program will also eliminate the need for each region to have any monetary contribution, maintain a Web site or produce a collateral piece. Further, AOT will work with Arizona Highways Magazine to produce a fulfillment piece for each region and will provide these pieces at no cost to the regions based on requests received through the In-state/Regional Marketing Program campaign efforts. AOT will also develop splash pages with a distinct URL that will include a brief overview of the region, suggested itineraries, a request form for collateral material and provide links to each community in that region for more information. For more information, please contact Amy Mercier at amercier@azot.gov or 602-364-3699.

** Phoenix and Central Arizona will be represented through the Prop 302 initiative and will be incorporated into the overall in-state campaign.*

Trippin' with AOT

AOT on the Road: Visiting Rural Tourism Development Grant Recipients

AOT staff recently visited two FY 06 Rural Tourism Development Grant (RTDGP) Award winners. The first stop was the Flagstaff Historic Train Station Platform in Flagstaff.. The Flagstaff Convention and Visitors Bureau award of \$50,000 will be used to preserve and maintain the platform brick pavers, install appropriate drainage, grate the

expansive walkway and build up the loading / unloading zone to meet railroad ADA requirements. The second stop was the City of Prescott. The City of Prescott received \$25,400. Funding will be used to purchase 360 banners for holiday and annual events, purchase a directional kiosk and upgrade the wiring in buildings. For more information, contact Karen Bult at 602-364-3708 or kbult@azot.gov.

Expo Vacaciones Consumer Show

The Arizona Office of Tourism is participating in the 1st annual Expo Vacaciones Consumer Show in Hermosillo, Mexico. The show is held at the Expo Forum in Hermosillo and is expected to attract more than 5,000 consumers. Exhibitors include members of the airline and hotel industry, media and DMOs. AOT is offering an opportunity for brochures to be distributed at Expo Vacaciones on June 9-11, 2006. There is limited space in the AOT exhibit, so AOT must limit participation to four DMOs/suppliers on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact Kristy McKinnon at kmckinnon@azot.gov or 602-364-3696 for more information.

Industry News

Price of Travel on the Rise

TIA's March Travel Price Index indicates that travel prices are rising in nearly every segment. Lodging prices were up 5.6 percent in March compared to the previous month, while gas prices continue to rise, increasing 3.9 percent from February and 17 percent from March 2005. Rising gas prices have also contributed to an increase in airfares, which rose 6.7 percent compared to last year. Developed by TIA, the Travel Price Index (TPI) measures the seasonally adjusted inflation rate of the cost of travel away from home in the U.S. (TIA e-Newsline, 4/27)

Gas Adds \$30 - \$50 to Typical Vacation

TIA compared current gas prices to those of a year ago and found that on the typical U.S. driving vacation of 800 miles, higher prices would add \$30 to overall trip costs. TIA also estimates that for larger vehicles and those towing a trailer or those that are heavily loaded, the per-trip cost will go up \$40 to \$50. That equates to the price of a dinner for two and is not likely to significantly alter travel plans. High gasoline prices historically cause Americans to make slight modifications to their travel plans but don't cause them to cancel. Gasoline shortages, however, have led travelers to cancel trips in the past. (TIA e-Newsline, 4/27)

International Visits to U.S. Continues Growth into 2006

The Commerce Department reported Thursday that 2.9 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in January, an increase of 11 percent over January 2005. Arrivals from Mexico to interior points in the U.S. were up 43 percent in January over the same

month a year ago, while Canadian arrivals grew 11 percent. Overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, increased 6 percent over January 2005, posting 28 consecutive months of growth. "As we approach National Tourism Week, it is encouraging to see a continuing trend of increased visitation to the U.S.," said Al Frink, assistant secretary for manufacturing and services at the Commerce Department. "In 2005, we recorded the second-highest number of visitors in U.S. history, and those visitors spent record dollars during their stays," he said. Details at 202-482-3809. (Special to Travel Advance)

Mobil Travel Guide Gives Four Star Rankings to Four Arizona Spas

Four Arizona spas have been ranked as Four Star properties for 2006 by the Mobil Travel Guide. They are the Alvalora Spa at the Royal Palms Resort, Phoenix; the Spa at the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North; the Centre for Well-Being at the Phoenician, Scottsdale; and the Spa at the Omni Tucson National Resort. The Mobil ratings are based on visits to more than 450 spas across the United States, by undercover inspectors. Every aspect of the spa is considered, from the reservation process and check-in to the public areas and locker rooms. The inspectors examine factors such as courtesy of staff, overall efficiency, guest comfort and convenience, luxury, therapists' technical execution/skill and knowledge and facility cleanliness/condition. For more, visit www.mobiltravelguide.com. (Phoenix Business Journal, 4/28)

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